Remarks

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present U.S. Patent application as amended herein. Claim 2 has been amended. No claims have been added or canceled herein. Claim 1, 3 and 13 have been canceled previously. Thus, claims 2, 4-12 and 14-42 are pending, of which claims 24-42 have been withdrawn.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-4 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207 issued to Jay S. Walker (*Walker*) in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (*AAPA*). Claims 1 and 3 have been canceled in a previous amendment. Therefore, the rejection of claims 1 and 3 is moot. For at least the reasons set forth below, Applicants submit that claims 2 and 4 are not rendered obvious by *Walker* and *AAPA*.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants would like to point out that the Office Action is inconsistent as to the grounds of rejection. For example, the Office Action states that claims 1-4 are rejected as being unpatentable over *Walker* and *AAPA* and then provides detailed rejections for claims 2-4, 13, 14, 6, 9, 10 and 21-23 as being unpatentable over *Walker* and *AAPA*. Further the Office Action states that claims 5-23 are rendered obvious by *Walker* alone. Applicants have made their best efforts to respond to the inconsistent grounds of rejection provided in the Office Action.

Claim 2 recites:

> a collaboration engine;
> control logic communicatively connected to the collaboration engine, wherein the control logic selectively invokes an instance of one or more features of the collaboration engine in response to commands received by the control logic;

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a network interface;
memory;
management applications communicatively connected to the control logic
a storage medium to store a plurality of collaboration rules; and
a collaboration agent, to provide an interface through which
digitally disparate sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers agree to
selectively participate in commercial transactions for requesting users, and
to enable each of the sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers to define terms
and conditions under which they selectively participate with one another
to facilitate commercial collaboration between these otherwise digitally
disparate providers to provide, at least in part, product inventory
information from participating sellers, dealers and/or manufacturers
including provider-specific product attributes, the collaboration agent to
automatically seed an inventory search result with options identified on
products currently available within inventory.

Thus, Applicants claim an apparatus having a collaboration engine, control logic,

management applications and a collaboration agent. The apparatus provides an agent that

can facilitate commercial collaboration between digitally disparate sellers, dealers and/or

manufacturers, including product inventory information with provider-specific product

attributes. The control logic selectively invokes an instance of one or more of the

features of the collaboration engine in response to commands received by the control

logic. Further, the collaboration engine automatically seeds an inventory search result

with options identified on products currently available within inventory.

Walker discloses a system in which a buyer may shop for *offers* available from

sellers. See col. 8, lines 28-41. More specifically, *Walker* discloses a system in which a

central controller is coupled with multiple modems that correspond to a buyer and

multiple sellers. See Figure 1. The central controller includes a processor, memory a

several databases. See Figure 2-4. However, nothing in *Walker* suggests the

collaboration engine automatically seeds an inventory search result with options

identified on products currently available within inventory as recited in claim 2.

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The central controller of *Walker* includes databases that store buyer information, seller information, offer information, account information, and cryptographic information. *Walker* does not disclose an equivalent of the collaboration engine automatically seeds an inventory search result with options identified on products currently available within inventory. Further, AAPA does not address or suggest this functionality. Therefore, *Walker* and AAPA, alone or in combination, cannot render obvious the invention as claimed in claim 2.

Claim 4 depends from claim 2. Because dependent claims include the limitations of the claims from which they depend, Applicants submit that claim 4 is not anticipated by *Walker* for at least the reasons set forth above.

Claims 6-12 and 14-23 were rejected as being unpatentable over *Walker*. Each of claims 6-12 and 14-23 depends, directly or indirectly, from claim 2. For at least the reasons set forth below, Applicants submit that claims 6-12 and 14-23 are not rendered obvious by *Walker*.

In rejecting claims 2-4, 13 and 14 the Office Action states that *Walker* discloses a collaborative engine, control logic, network interface, memory and a management application. However, as discussed above, even if *Walker* discloses each of these elements, Walker does not disclose automatically seeds an inventory search result with options identified on products currently available within inventory. Therefore, *Walker* cannot suggest the invention as claimed in claims 2, 4 and 14.

CONCLUSION

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if

such contact would further the examination of the present application. Please charge any

shortages and credit any overcharges to our Deposit Account number 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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